

Turks and more than 500,000 others were deported.

□ 1945

Unfortunately, there were others included in this massacre, including Assyrians and Pontic Greeks, bringing the number to well over 3.5 million lost lives.

Today, April 24, marks the 86th anniversary of the beginning of the genocide. It was on this day in 1915 that more than 200 Armenian religious, political and intellectual leaders were gathered together and murdered in Constantinople. This was the beginning of an organized, brutal campaign to eliminate the Armenian presence from the Ottoman Empire. This campaign lasted for over 8 years. During this time, Armenians were systematically uprooted from their homeland of over 3,000 years and eliminated through massacres or deportation. But Armenians are strong people, and their dream of freedom did not die. More than 70 years after the genocide, the new Republic of Armenia was born as the Soviet Union crumbled.

Today, we pay tribute to the courage and strength of people who would not know defeat. I was privileged to meet with many of these people this past weekend on Sunday in my district where Sam Azadian along with Archbishop Barsamian and many others held a meeting where we remembered the massacres. One of the survivors, Sano Halo, was there. Her daughter has written a book about her life entitled "Not Even My Name." It tells the story of Ms. Halo who, at the age of 10, was uprooted with her family with thousands of Pontic Greeks and forced by the Turks on a brutal death march. Ms. Halo saw her entire family die of starvation and disease in front of her eyes, or assault and murder by the Turks. Through circumstances, she was able to survive and has come to the United States and now lives in my district.

Unfortunately, even with the truthful, thoughtful accounts from people who experienced the genocide such as Ms. Halo, there are those who question the reality of the Armenian slaughter. That is why it is so important that in this Congress we must finally pass the resolution documenting the Armenian genocide. We must follow the moral leadership of France and Italy whose national assemblies unanimously passed a bill that officially recognizes the genocide of 1.5 million Armenians in Turkey during and after World War II. And we must follow the leadership of many of our State legislatures. Over 27 legislatures have passed proclamations, resolutions, bills recognizing the genocide.

For the people of Armenia, the fight still continues today, particularly for the Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh, who are impacted by modern day Tur-

key and Azerbaijan's aggression toward Armenia in the continued blockade. I am hopeful that the recent talks in Key West between the Armenian and Azerbaijan presidents will move them one step closer toward peace. A peaceful solution is important to United States interests.

We have supported Armenia with direct assistance and with confidence-building allocations. I strongly support the efforts of the Armenian community to dedicate a museum and memorial commemorating the victims of the Armenian genocide. This year, their dream became a reality with the purchase of a building near the White House. Nothing we can say will bring back those who perished, but we can honor their memories with everlasting meaning by teaching the lessons of the Armenian genocide to the next generation.

As the great philosopher George Santayana once said, "Those who do not remember the past are condemned to repeat it." Let us learn our lesson and never forget the Armenians.

EXCHANGE OF SPECIAL ORDER TIME

Mr. SOUDER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to claim the time of the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. KIRK).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Indiana?

There was no objection.

ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. SOUDER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SOUDER. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a few minutes to add my voice and join my colleagues in remembering and paying tribute to those Armenians who lost their lives and national identity during one of the 20th century's tragic examples of persecution and intolerance, the Armenian genocide of 1915-1923.

Many Armenians in America, particularly Indiana, are the children and grandchildren of survivors. In fact, tonight I may represent the fewest number here. I think I have either two or six Armenians in my district. But some 20 years ago my friend, Zohrab Tazian, did a presentation to a Rotary Club as I watched the historical film in the background of how the Armenians were destroyed and chased, and listened to his personal story of how his family fled down to Lebanon; and eventually he made his way to the United States. It touched me, as do other human rights tragedies such as this.

We commemorate this tragedy because it marks the beginning of the persecution, ethnic cleansing of the Ar-

menian people by the Ottoman Turks on April 24, 1915. Armenian political, intellectual and religious leaders were arrested, forcibly moved from their homeland and killed. The brutality continued against the Armenian people as families were uprooted from their homes and marched to concentration camps in the desert where many would eventually starve to death.

In 1919 when recalling the event, the U.S. Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, Henry Morgenthau, Sr. said, "I am confident that the whole history of the human race contains no such horrible episode as this. The great massacres and persecutions of the past seem almost insignificant when compared to the sufferings of the Armenian race in 1915." As we heard Hitler say when he moved into the Holocaust period, "Who remembers the Armenians?"

By 1923, the religious and ideological persecution by the Ottoman Turks resulted in the murder of 1.5 million Armenian men, women and children and the displacement of an additional 500,000 Armenians.

The 20th century has borne witness to many acts of brutality and savagery by despotic regimes who sought to deny people human rights and religious freedoms. Examples abound, such as Stalin against the Russians, Hitler against the Jews, Mao Tse-tung against the Chinese, Pol Pot against the Cambodians, and currently Bashir against the Sudanese.

Genocide has devastating consequences for society as a whole because of the problems created by uprooting entire populations. It is bad enough to see the persecutions that we see in Tiananmen Square, where governments do not acknowledge the shooting of civilians; but when you uproot entire subgroups based on their background, as has happened in Bosnia, as Serbia was trying to do, and clearly on a massive scale in Turkey vis-a-vis the Armenians, it is tragic. The survivors become the ones who carry the memory of the suffering and the realization that their loved ones are gone. They are the ones who no longer have a home and may feel ideological and spiritual abandonment.

Part of the healing process for any victims of genocide, including Armenian survivors and families of survivors, involves acknowledgment of the atrocity and the admission of wrongdoing by those who perpetrated the persecution. It is only through acknowledgment and forgiveness that it is possible to move beyond the past.

Unfortunately, those responsible for ordering the systematic removal of the Armenians were never brought to justice, and the Armenian Genocide has become a dark moment in history, even an unacknowledged moment.

It is important that we remember this tragic event and show strong leadership by denouncing the persecution